Media Training

9 Mar. 2010

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Why engage the media?

- Communication channel to public
  - What public thinks depends on what public hears
- Informed public necessary to build and maintain support
- Get message to more people, more quickly
- Includes INTERNAL audience
- Through education, possible to change opinions

Goal: Inform and Educate

Media 101

- Know who you're talking to
  - National Press – great strategic sources
  - Local / Trade press reporter – varyin degrees of understanding on issues
- Understand their constraints
  - Deadlines!
  - Time and space limitations
- Understand their goals
  - Need to interview a credible source
  - Often gaining context from other sources
  - Compete for ratings…it's business

Know your audience

Keys to Success

- Professionalism
  - Subject matter expert
    - You are the authority
  - Credibility
  - Core values
- Enthusiasm
  - Be yourself!
- You are “on the record”
  - Automatically become a spokesperson

YOU are the ideal spokesperson

Getting Ready…

- Prepare your remarks
- Don’t want to see it in print? Don’t say it!
- Speak with “themes and communication points” in mind
- Most Common – print
  - Local, National, Trade Outlets
  - Deadlines: Daily or Weekly
  - Calm, confident, correct

Goal: Provide 3 “take away’s”

The 4 C’s of Success

- Control
- Commercials
- Cosmetics
- Commandment

Control

- Know what to expect and be ready to participate actively
- Ground rules
  - Establish attribution with PAO
  - Length of time
- Be positive and energetic
- Stay in your lane
- Listen carefully to questions
- Look at reporter throughout interview
- Avoid
  - Comparisons
  - Promises
  - Speculation
  - Repeating negatives

Calm, Confident, Correct

Commercials

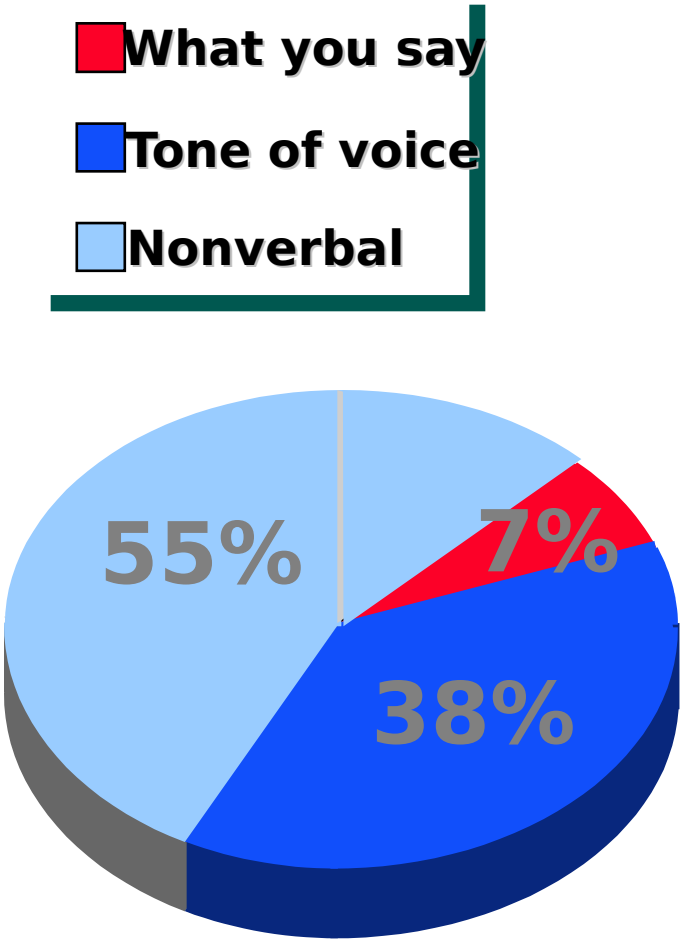
- Choose two or three communication points --- “commercials”
- Put them up front
- What do you want the audience to remember?
- Preparation is KEY…
- Anticipate likely questions, and work to fit your commercials into your answers
- Don’t just answer the questions you get…BRIDGE to your own commercials
- Know what you DO NOT want to say

Commercials

- Messages that work
  - Savings in money or time
  - Increased efficiency
  - Human interest
- Make them “sing”
- Do not dilute message with jargon and heavy detail
- “Do you have something to add?” YES!

Short. Clear. Honest. Simple. Direct.

Cosmetics



- You are the message!
- Appearance matters
  - Body language
    - Watch for nervous movements
  - posture
  - Right uniform / clothing / right look
  - Wear all ribbons
  - LONG socks
  - NEVER sunglasses
- Attitude matters
  - Avoid hostile or arrogant attitude
  - Watch for verbal tics

Commandment

- **Thou Shalt Not Lie**
  - **Thou shalt not exaggerate**
  - **Thou shalt not guess**

Honesty = Accuracy

Types of Questions

- Softball: Open-ended, non-threatening
  - *Tell me about your program?*
- Loaded: Uses negative language
  - *How will the severe maintenance delays hurt your program?*
- Negative Entrapment: Baits you with negativism
  - *What gives you the biggest headaches in your job – keeping Sailors focused on safe operations, dealing with citizen advocacy groups that hate the military, or people problems like divorce and suicide?*

Don’t Know What to Say?

- “I really can’t address that part of the issue, but I can say that…”
- “I don’t know if I am the best person to comment on that subject, but I can discuss…”
- “When we have all the information, we will be happy to provide it to you. What we do know is…”
- “It would be inappropriate for me to speculate.”

The Parachute

Practice, Practice, Practice

- Theory is good; practice is better
- Remember:
  - Bad news does not improve with age
  - Call a PAO
    - Preparation
    - execution
- Media = vehicle to disseminate your message

And… Practice!

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